

MACAULAY'S THIRD CHAPTER

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In his review of Sir James Mackintosh's History of the Revolution in 1688,¹ Macaulay discusses what the permanent gains of the Revolution were. He mentions five—the Toleration Act, the final establishment of the Presbyterian Kirk in Scotland, the alteration in the mode of granting supplies, the purification of the administration of justice in political cases, and the full establishment of the liberty of unlicensed printing. He dwells at length on the last, which he regarded as the most important. During the greater part of the reign of Charles II the press had been fettered by the rigorous censorship established in 1662. From 1679 to 1683 it regained its freedom, but only to fall under the severe control of the law courts when Charles II triumphed over the Whigs.² James II's Parliament revived the system of censorship ;³ and the Licensing Act of James II continued in force till 1693, and, when it expired, was renewed for a couple of years. But the new licensers employed fell into discredit, and in 1695, when the Act expired, the House of Commons refused to renew it. Macaulay somewhat over-emphasises the emancipation of the press.

Meanwhile events which no preceding historian has condescended to mention, but which were of far greater importance than the achievements of

William's army or of
Russell's fleet, were taking place in London.
A great
experiment was making. A great revolution
was in pro-
gress. Newspapers had made their
appearance.⁴

It is certainly true that other historians
of the reign,

¹ Edinburgh Review, July 1835 (reprinted in Essays, ii.
104-9),

- Macaulay, I, 237, 260 (ii), 380 (iii).

³ Ibid. II, 574 (v), 762 (vi), 854 (vii), 910.

⁴ Ibid. V, 2540-8 (xxi).